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FROM: BOB GILLULY
SPORTS NEWS EDITOR
MONTANA UNIVERSITY

MISSOULA---Loss of three regulars off a team that finished in a sixth-place tie in the conference leaves little room for optimism, but Montana coach Frosty Cox thinks his edition of the basketball Grizzlies next season could be improved.

"We certainly couldn't do much worse than this past season," the mentor commented this week after his Silvertips dug themselves out of the Skyline basement with an 82-67 win over Wyoming last Saturday. The victory tied MSU with New Mexico for sixth place in the league and gave them a 7-17 record for the campaign.

Playing their final games as Silvertips were three starters--guards Dan Balko and Vince Ignatowicz and forward John Lands. Balko had been a fixture in the lineup for three years, while Ignatowicz and Lands played strong roles in the past two seasons.

This leaves Cox with a measure of varsity talent for next season. One returnee will be center Duane Ruegsegger, the 6-5 redhead who averaged 15 points a game in the second half of the season and who showed good overall improvement in his junior year. Another topnotcher is forward Terry Srenar, who improved his scoring average to roughly 14 points a game this season. Srenar had his ups and downs during the season, however, and must add consistency to his repertoire.

Two sophomores--guard Bob O'Billovich and forward Dan Sullivan of Butte--will help considerably next season. Both were inexperienced as yearlings, but gained poise as the season progressed. The same applies to guard Ron Quilling of Sidney, and juniors Kay Roberts and Paul Miller. The eleventh man on the squad--soph Butch Hendricks--saw little action during the season but may be of more help next year.

(more)

Three men, and possibly others, will move up from the freshman ranks. Best bet to take Balko's place is little Ray Lucien, a lightning-quick guard who paced the Cubs in scoring during the season with a 17-point average.

If 6-6 Steve Lowry of Red Lodge continues to improve, Cox will have the answer to his need for a rugged big man. Lowry, who packs 220 pounds and moves well for a big man, is a topnotch rebounder who can score. Also in the picture is freshman Larry Riley of Roundup, who possesses a good shooting eye but must improve his overall play. Forward Jim Bryngelson of Billings is another strong possibility.

"We lacked scoring consistency and rebounding strength during the past season," says Cox. "If our veterans continue to improve and the sophomores provide some help, we should be in better shape next winter," he concluded.

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MISSOULA---Cornell Green of Utah State, who tossed in 48 points in two games against Montana this season, was the top vote-getter on the MSU all-opponent team selected this week by vote of the 11 Grizzly squad members.

Others on the first team were forward Jim Peay and guard Jerry Cole of Denver; center Bill (The Hill) McGill, Utah; and guard Max Perry of Utah State.

On the all-opponent second team were Chuck Newcomb of Colorado State; Francis Grant of New Mexico; Tyler Wilbon of Utah State; and Bill Cowan and Joe Morton of Utah.

Only Skyline opponents were picked on the squad. The Grizzlies also were high in praise of John Maras and Dwight Damon, Washington State; Larry Chanay, Montana State; Hershell Turner, Nebraska, and Joe King of Idaho.

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